

EIGHT DAYS IN MAY

1970 Student Unrest at Washington and Lee in Retrospect

William Webb Pusey III

The Fortnightly Club, November 29, 1985

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION reported in May 1970 that the combination of Cambodia and Kent State resulted in the most widespread campus unrest in the history of American higher education. At more than 400 colleges, students went on strike, often peacefully but sometimes with violent results. At least 200 institutions were shut down at some point and several stayed closed for the rest of the academic year.

For “Eight Days in May,” Washington and Lee was intensively involved in the turmoil that swept across the nation’s campuses. No strike actually took place, classes were generally continued, and the institution was not shut down. Yet it was a crucial and unstable period here, and had it not been for the skillful and courageous leadership of President Bob Huntley (backed by the active and vocal support

of most — but not all — of the faculty), the *ultimate* reasonableness of most of the student body, and doubtless a little bit of luck, abuses occurring at other institutions could well have taken place at General Lee’s College; for as President Huntley remarked, the university for a time was indeed “between a rock and a hard place.”

A little more than fifteen years have now gone by, and distance should help in making a fair assessment of events that still may seem improbable at Washington and Lee. I’ve tried to be accurate with the facts, but if I’ve not been able to be entirely dispassionate, I beg your forgiveness. And if occasionally my account sounds over-dramatic, I’m not insensitive to the recent natural catastrophes that have struck Mexico, Colombia and Rockbridge County.

II

[Mr. Pusey undertook a brief history of earlier crises at the college — for our purposes moved from here to an appendix.]

III

After World War II, veterans streamed back, salaries continued to rise, several new academic programs were introduced, and, not without pain, subsidization of athletics was eliminated. In the 1960s the academic quality of the students (as measured by Scholastic Aptitude Test scores) soared, and moderate — and, most thought, forward-looking — changes in academic matters and student relations took place, initiated by faculty, students, and administration, including, for example, elimination of Saturday classes; introduction of pass-fail grades; drastic alteration to absence policies; independent examination schedules; the end of conventional dress [mandatory coats and ties]; availability of research grants for students; humanization of rules; the heart-warming courage of a faculty committee inviting Martin Luther King to speak on campus, leading to a liberalized policy on outside speakers; beginnings of desegregation; respected and popular presidents, the appearance of strange-looking contraptions, specifically computers, on campus; the adoption of a new academic calendar with the elimination of narrow distribution requirements; and an increasing and mutual faculty-student dislike of parietals [dormitory visitation policies]. Who could ask for anything more?

Then, one day early in May 1970, to the surprise of almost everybody here, all these changes suddenly became quite irrelevant. Much of academia, it appeared, during the past half-decade had been marching to a different beat.

IV

It all began in Berkeley in September 1964, when student activists were ordered to remove their “literature” from the campus’s main gate.

In November, Mario Savio, the principal spokesman of the Free Speech Movement, was accused of having bitten a policeman. When the university refused to drop charges against him, students took over the administration building. Joan Baez sang “We Shall Overcome,” and a “free university” was organized in the building. On December 3, a strike took place, and more than half the university’s classes did not meet. Eventually, President Clark Kerr, who was anything but a despot, was forced out. A new administration was more patient and responsive to student demands, but it too failed to please or appease the militants. From 1965 on, campus disturbances continued at Berkeley, and vandalism became commonplace.

The Students for a Democratic Society, which in 1962 Tom Hayden pledged to use for the creation of a “New Left,” consisted of numerous, often conflicting strands, including “participatory democracy” (equals anarchy), resistance to the draft, Marxism, nihilism (hippies and yippies), objectors to parietal regulations, “talking dirty” (Hoffman and Rubin), anti-racism, women’s rights, objection to the war in Vietnam and the invasion of Cambodia, and the fun of defying authority, particularly vulnerable at universities.

In this connection, I’m reminded of an opinion expressed by one of Turgenev’s “Fathers” about the “Sons” of the 1860s:

Formerly, young men had to study; they didn’t want to be known as ignoramuses, so they had to work hard whether they liked it or not. But now, all they have to do is say, “Everything in the world is humbug!” and the trick’s done. . . . Now they have suddenly blossomed into nihilists.

The tide of campus demonstrations continued in 1968 and 1969. The protest at Columbia University was one of the most spectacular. Students took over several buildings, including Lowe Library, where President Grayson Kirk’s files were ransacked and his sherry drunk. Kirk called in the police, the rebellion was suppressed, Mark Rudd became a television personality, the university closed early, and the president, who by leniency at the beginning and harshness at the end had alienated all shades of public opinion, soon thereafter resigned,

Student protests also erupted, notably, at Harvard, Cornell and Swarthmore, leading to the departure of presidents Nathan Pusey and James Perkins, and to the death of Swarthmore’s highly-regarded Courtney Smith, from a heart attack ironically occurring during a confrontation with the black students whom he had helped bring to campus.

To be sure, by the fall of 1969 there were on our campus some indications of an awareness of the war in Vietnam and of the unrest at other colleges and universities. On October 15, about 500 students observed “Moratorium Day,” listening to speakers of varying persuasions at Lee Chapel. More-radical sessions, to be sure, were held at UVa, where more than a thousand people were addressed by a leader of the antiwar movement, while an attempt to lower the American flag to half-mast was stopped peacefully by the university police. There was a teach-in at Blacksburg [at Virginia Tech, then known as Virginia Polytechnic Institute]. In Williamsburg [at the College of William & Mary], a coffin was carried to the colonial capitol, where a vigil was maintained. A month later, a Washington and Lee contingent of fifty to sixty students participated in an antiwar march in the nation’s capital. In January 1970, according the college newspaper, a protest group of about fifty, bearing the name “Lee-Hi Truck Stop Liberation Front” or “Stop,” was organized to express opposition to the war in Vietnam, the Reserve Officers Training Corps, and environmental pollution.* And that is about all — at least all that came to public attention in Lexington.

But the expansion of the war into Cambodia on April 30 and the killing of four students by National Guardsmen at Kent State University on May 4 inspired a number of Washington and Lee students to take action on our campus, and a rally was announced for the next evening in front of Lee Chapel. Thus began at Washington and Lee what came to be called “Eight Days in May,” the topic we’ve been inching up on and to which we shall now turn.

The facts of this “time of troubles” have been fully and carefully outlined in President Huntley’s “Message to Parents of Washington and Lee Students” (May 13, 1970) and in an article in the June 1970 alumni magazine. In addition to providing a factual summary drawn from these sources, I shall add personal recollections and a few anecdotes, since (as were several other members of the Fortnightly), *I was there.*†

DAY I: Tuesday, May 5

The day began with a “minor incident.” In order to avoid the risk of a confrontation between rival student groups or having recourse to the local police, the dean of stu-



* The Lee-Hi was and is a truck stop about five miles north of Lexington, occasionally visited by students because it was one of the few restaurants open all night.

† Mr. Pusey was at the time dean of The College, the university’s chief academic officer.

dents* (wisely) took upon himself to have an inverted American flag emblazoned with a strike fist removed from a conspicuous dormitory window. (President Junkin would have approved.†)

At the rally called for the evening by a number of predominantly radical students concerned with national problems, about 400 to 500 persons assembled in front of Lee Chapel to hear an appeal for a strike against class attendance in order to go to a demonstration at UVa the next morning, where Jerry Rubin and his lawyer, William Kunstler, were to appear. President Huntley also spoke to the gathering, praising its orderliness and urging moderation and toleration of divergent views.

DAY II: Wednesday, May 6



From *The Calyx* (student yearbook).

Approximately forty students carrying crosses and shouting “Strike!” picketed along the Colonnade for about two hours. No effort was made to prevent other students from attending class, and most apparently did. Many showed their opposition to the strike by wearing coats and ties.

(As I entered Washington Hall [central administrative office building] that morning, according to my present recollection, the protesting students looked self-conscious and slightly embarrassed. They were greeted with good-natured banter by those on their way to class.)

An estimated 200 W&L students attended the rally in Charlottesville. It seems to have intensified the concern of many moderate students and to have influenced them to join in the effort for some sort of action. Late that evening, Fran Lawrence, president-elect of the student body, and Staman Ogilvie of the student executive committee‡ reported to the president of the student body, Marvin (“Swede”) Henberg, that a lot of students were angry. It was decided to call a student assembly later in the week.

From *The Calyx* (student yearbook).

* Lewis G. John

† See Appendix, p. 7.

‡ The student executive committee was the legislative arm of student government (and supreme court of the student-run honor system).

DAY III: Thursday, May 7

In response to the view expressed by some students to President Huntley that the academic program was irrelevant to national issues, he and the faculty executive committee decided to call a special faculty meeting that evening. At this meeting, which I remember as rather low key, the faculty voted: (1) to allow a student, on application to a faculty committee, to remain in college and receive an “I” (incomplete) grade in his current courses; and (2) “as an expression of its deep concern over the present national situation . . . to sponsor a suitable program for on-campus discussions.” The meeting terminated at 10:45 p.m.

Meanwhile about seventy-five to 100 students, gathered in the University Center Cockpit [pub] to discuss the agenda for the assembly scheduled for the next day, called for closing the university as of May 11 and for replacing regular classes with discussions and seminars on the political and philosophical ramifications of the war in Indochina and on other national issues. Neither Henberg nor Lawrence, who had been present briefly (?) at the faculty meeting, nor the faculty was fully aware of what was taking place at student gatherings in the Cockpit and elsewhere on campus. I remember that on leaving the faculty meeting I (naïvely) felt that the putative crisis had likely been defused.

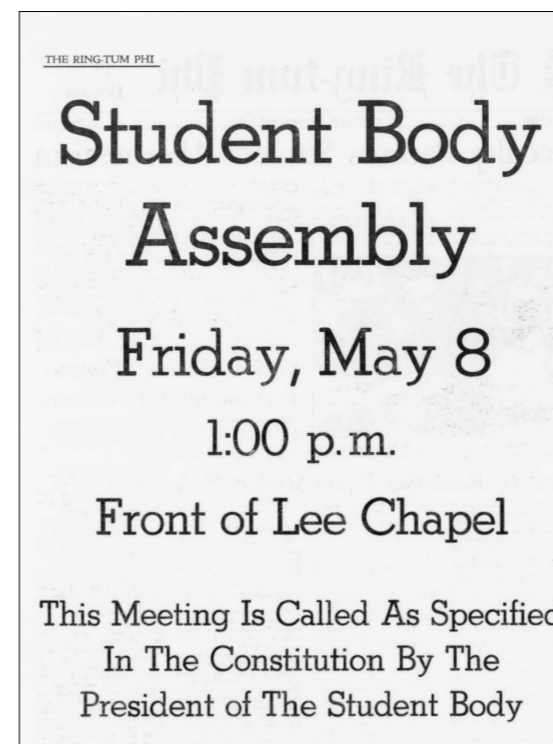


DAY IV: Friday May 8

At the student assembly on the front lawn, the resolution of the previous evening to suspend classes was presented and discussed, but with Henberg’s encouragement the vote was postponed until Monday. Thereupon some 250 students set off for Washington to participate in an antiwar demonstration over the weekend.

DAY V: Saturday, May 9

During the weekend, many alumni were on campus for annual class reunions and talked informally with students about their proposals and the war. The reunions proceeded without incident, and alumni





Classroom desk. From *The Calyx* (student yearbook).

leaders assured President Huntley of the alumni's support.

DAY VI: Sunday, May 10

A memorial service was held for the students killed at Kent State. The outgoing and incoming student executive committees also met in joint session and gave qualified support to the student resolution.

DAY VII: Monday, May 11

Balloting took most of the day. In short, the proposal called for the cancellation of all classes retroactively to May 6 in order to “direct the university towards the crisis in this country” through seminars and discussions for those interested. Students

were to arrange their grades by continuing to study individually with their professors, receiving their present grades (I think), or with a simple pass/fail grade on work completed.

The vote, for various reasons, was overwhelming: 1,065 (including Lawrence) were for the resolution and 254 (including Henberg) were against it.

President Huntley was gone from the campus during the latter part of the day, conferring with Mr. Lewis Powell of Richmond, one of our most distinguished and respected trustees.

The faculty assembled in the evening in an emotion-charged meeting, held for reasons of comfort (it had air conditioning) on the second floor of Reid Hall [journalism building] rather than in its usual meeting place [biology building], and later adjourned to Lee Chapel. Attendance was almost complete. The discussion was frank, sometimes heated, but never uncivil. I need no Proustian cookie to remember, for instance, that I stated that I was “unalterably opposed to the cancellation of classes,” a pronouncement that drew applause from about three-quarters of our normally undemonstrative faculty.

A general faculty position was carefully formulated by its executive committee (slightly expanded). On motion of the dean of the college [Mr. Pusey himself], and duly seconded, it passed



without audible dissenting vote. The statement, supplementing the action of May 7, recognized the students' concern about major national issues and stipulated that the following actions would be taken:

1. *In addition* to regularly scheduled classes and examinations, all available resources would be used to conduct seminars and discussions on the Indo-china war and other problems facing our society and the world.
2. A student wishing to discontinue class attendance to participate in these programs will receive an “I” grade in any or all of his current courses, with the opportunity of removing the incomplete grade when course work was completed — by September 30, 1970, at the latest. A student could elect this option by submitting an appropriate letter to the faculty executive committee by May 21.
3. All absence regulations are suspended, and students would be allowed to attend class at their own discretion.

This action of the faculty was not popular with the student government organization. A few faculty members who later that evening courageously tried to explain the university's position to a large number of students in the dining hall were shouted at.* Occupying Washington Hall was averted by a plan to boycott classes, submit a further proposal to the faculty, and to hold another assembly the next morning.

DAY VIII: Tuesday, May 12 — The Climax

The mood at this assembly was one of defiance. A statement by the student executive committee (in the formulation of which Henberg was allowed no part) condemned the “irresponsi-

* Mr. Pusey's typescript has a handwritten note at this point: “T. Imeson / E. C. Atwood” — Thomas C. Imeson, professor of chemistry and computer science, and Edward C. Atwood Jr., erstwhile dean of students and in 1970 dean of the School of Commerce, Economics and Politics.



President Huntley, in the doorway of Washington Hall. W&L staff photo by A. Michael Philipps.

ble” faculty action in the strongest terms, and called for the reconsideration of its “ill-advised and disrespectful action.” Resistance should be shown by boycotting classes, non-payment of registration fees, failure to register for next year’s classes, and active participation in seminars and antiwar activities.

At noon, President Huntley presided at a university assembly he had called the night before to explain the faculty’s action. He addressed his still-hostile student audience forthrightly and with dignity and admirable restraint. After his prepared remarks he took questions from the students, which were frequently couched gratuitously in four-letter words: a nadir in student behavior in my forty-five years at General Lee’s College. Untiring and unintimidated, after the question period, Bob Huntley remained under the columns responding to further angry and uncivil queries.

The meeting appeared to end in a stalemate, but during the afternoon, Henberg, Phil Thompson, Joe Tompkins, and other cooler heads among student leaders informed the student body that no further avenues of approach were open to it. Students were urged to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the faculty action of the preceding day.

“With that the campus returned to normal, insofar as the conditions created by the ‘Eight Days in May’ permitted” (*Alumni Magazine*).

I cannot document this, but I have a dim memory that I was told that at the peak of their discontent some of our students paid a visit to [adjacent] Virginia Military Institute in search of allies. When the cadets’ response was unenthusiastic, the students discreetly returned to our campus.*

VIII

Set up almost overnight and involving the participation of many faculty members as discussion leaders, Washington and Lee’s “Free University Forum” was welcomed enthusiastically by students. It included such topics as “The Impact of the Indochina War on the Ecology of Vietnam,” “How Students Can Work within the Party Ap-

* Handwritten notation on the typescript: “Gen. Shell [superintendent of VMI at the time] remembered having heard of this, but had no first-hand knowledge of it. — Shell to Pusey, 1/22/86.”

Additionally, handwritten on a sheet of notepad paper and clipped to the typescript in the library is this handwritten note:

1/24/86 Later conversation with Gen. Shell. His wife, Alice, reminded him that on a Friday parade at VMI during the “Eight Days in May,” 4 W&L students appeared in black capes, “looking sinister,” and pelted cadets (with what? did he say marshmallows?). The cadets thought it was funny, but military police ushered the students off the post for their safety. Gen. Shell also thought it was amusing.

Per telephone to WWPIII

paratus,” “Civil Disobedience,” “War,” “Technological Revolution,” “The University as an Instrument of Social Change,” “The Meaning of the News,” and “Pacifism, the Crusades and the Just War.”

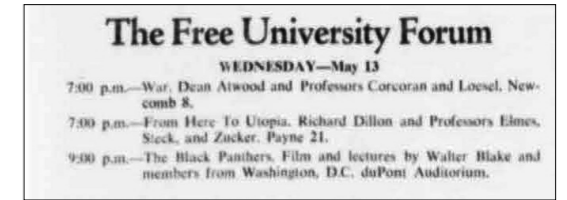
The Free University courses served their purpose well as an adjunct to the regular academic program. They were an absolute necessity at the time, and thinking back I question whether without them the students would have finally accepted the unpopular faculty decision to keep the university open. (I must admit that my support for the forum was pragmatic rather than philosophical.)

When September came, however, it seemed that no one any longer felt the need for a Free University, and it did not reappear.

A couple of days after the general protest on campus subsided, a group of students composed largely of those who had organized the first rally agreed, with their counterparts at Brandeis University, to establish in Lexington a “Southern Regional Strike Headquarters,” to gather information on antiwar activities on campuses in the South. Declared a bona fide student activity by the student executive committee, while given no financial support, the group was assigned office space in the University Center; at worst it was a PR irritation. When the University Center closed at the end of the school year, the Regional Strike Headquarters moved to an apartment off campus, where it expired.

Five-hundred forty-five undergraduates [about 30 percent of the total] signed up for grades of “incomplete” in 1,300 courses, but by the end of the session, the number fell to 397 students in 889 courses. When finally resolved, there were 150 F grades, and thirty-eight I’s remained (mostly on graduates’ records). It should be mentioned here that the huge task of approving the incomplete grades was handled with his customary competence and patience by the associate dean of the college† and the deans’ efficient secretary. An unforeseen difficulty arose that fall in the case of one faculty member who was no longer at Washington and Lee; he was reluctant to take the time to prepare and grade make-up exams, since he was no longer employed by the university.

No I grades were permitted in the law school. To the displeasure of the student bar association, Dean [Roy] Steinheimer insisted that his students “behave like professionals” and take their examinations on time, and all did. Thus, unlike



† William J. Watt

law graduates at Harvard and Columbia, where examinations were postponed, ours were admitted to the bar without delay.

At commencement, sixty graduates did not wear caps and gowns, preferring to put the rental money into the Student War Memorial Scholarship Fund. (There were, to be sure, a few tense moments as the graduation procession formed, lest some students defy the Public Functions Committee's edict, and march barefooted. None did.) Eight seniors failed to graduate in June because of I grades but they were eligible to be graduated in October if they removed their incomplete grades by the assigned deadline.

IX — Observations

Although "Eight Days in May" ended happily at Washington and Lee, it was clear at the time that danger lurked and that violent disorder might well break out here, as indeed happened on numerous other campuses. A "campus newsletter" on May 11, for instance, reported violence at the University of Wisconsin and the resignation of its president; the occupation of Williams Hall and 175 arrests at Virginia Polytechnic Institute; and the burning of the ROTC building at the University of Nevada. (At the University of Massachusetts the ROTC facility was turned into a day-care center).

On our campus Jim Whitehead was, understandably, deeply concerned about the safety of the valuable Reeves Collection,* stored in the basement of the ROTC building. He packed the best pieces of the collection in fifty barrels and moved them off campus for the duration. He found out later that the building was being guarded by some of our *own* students from an expected incursion of rioters from elsewhere.

At the height of the tension, the Lee House [home of the president and his family] was protected by a student guard. The story goes that Mrs. Huntley established control over her protectors by ordering them to bring the potted plants onto the porch in case of frost. It may be remembered, however, that at UVa hostile students did attack the president's house, but — in the absence of the president[†] — were turned back by his resolute wife, Eleanor.

President Huntley spent countless hours talking with Lawrence and other student leaders, dispassionately and confidently arguing the cause of order and reason. It is my opinion now, as it was then, that this communication and his other actions, backed as they were by the majority (though not all) of the faculty, were the main reasons the crisis was overcome. But Bob was not unaware that he might have to

* Vast, priceless collection of antique Chinese porcelain, then recently donated to the university, now world renowned. Jim Whitehead had acquired it for the university and was its curator.

† Edgar F. Shannon Jr. (Lexington native and a Washington and Lee graduate and trustee)

WEATHER
 TODAY — Partly cloudy, thunder storms. High in 80's.
 TOMORROW — Scattered showers. High in 80's.
 FRIDAY — Showers. Little change in temperature.

THE RING-TUM PHI

Washington and Lee University's Weekly Newspaper



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LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA, MAY 13, 1970
Number 42

Faculty, Student Leaders Ask For Stability

Students Accept Proposal 4 to 1; Faculty Modifies Former Motion

In a special faculty meeting Monday night, a resolution was passed suspending absence regulations entirely for the remainder of the spring semester.

The faculty resolution gives students the option of dropping out of one or more of their courses but continuing to take others if they wish.

If students choose to do so, they will receive a temporary grade of "incomplete" in the courses, and will be required to make up the work they miss before September 30. If the work is not accomplished by that date, they will receive permanent grade of "F".

The faculty also voted to devote "all available resources" of the University to conduct seminar-type programs throughout the remaining two weeks of classes to analyze the "economic, political, philosophical

voted for a resolution which asked the faculty to suspend classes for students who felt that they would conscientiously continue their work.

In a scheduled referendum Monday, students voted four-to-one to ask the faculty to suspend classes for the rest of the semester unless individual students and professors arrange on their own to continue course work.

With 96.5 per cent of the 1400 member student body voting, 1,065 votes—80.7—were cast in favor of the motion seeking the so-called "soft-shutdown."

Only 254 votes, 19.3 percent, were cast against the resolution, which had been endorsed by both the current year's and next year's Executive Committees.

The following is the text of the resolution the faculty passed Monday night which did not accommodate



Huntley Clarifies Faculty Action For Student Body

President Robert E. R. Huntley spoke yesterday to a University assembly conducted in front of Lee Chapel, attempting to explain the ramifications of Monday's faculty decision on the overwhelming approved student referendum.

At the same time he commented upon the events of the past several days on the Washington and Lee campus.

Huntley opened the proceedings by reading the faculty's report on the referendum, and followed with presentations of "clarifications" of both the original and the revised faculty proposals.

He stressed that any senior who exercised the "F" option and postponed his work until September would be postponing his graduation until October.

He also addressed remarks to stu-

stration this week, pointing out that such students would be given the opportunity to register in September and would be, under long-standing University policy, a part of the University during the summer.

The President believed that the faculty shares the students' concern and had acted, in his belief, responsibly.

The defeat of the proposed pass-fail option, which was understood clearly by the faculty, was the result of two factors, the President said.

First, Washington and Lee has no way at this time, of assessing the wisdom of taking the option, and secondly, such an option was considered "tantamount to cancelling the operations of the University."

The President closed the meeting by urging students not to "confine lack of agreement with lack of

go further than words. Years later, over a relaxing bourbon, he mentioned to me a court order he had obtained — and thank God never had to use — to allow bringing outside forces onto the campus to preserve order.

The motivations of the students who voted more than four-to-one in favor of closing down the university were complex, and any explanation is bound to be controversial. In 1977 I offered a student interviewer my interpretation:

I am convinced that a number of student who voted (for closing the university) voted most sincerely because they believed that they could accomplish more by not going to college at that time. I am equally convinced that there were a number of people who thought it would be nice to start exams early (or eliminate them entirely).

I was struck at the time by the possibility of a kind of mob psychology, even among normally civil young men, given the leadership of a small group of zealots who suddenly were perceived to be charismatic: Scary.

An anecdote, characteristic of the times: I was asked to talk with an excellent student who was threatening not to return to Washington and Lee. He was upset that his father was just a "money-grubber." When he told me he had a sister also in college or college-bound, I suggested that he might wish to alleviate his father's financial burden by transferring to a state college in the city where he lived. He then responded that he wanted W&L to increase his scholarship so that he could continue here.

X — Some Conclusions


What were the lasting effects of the events in May 1970? The University Council was organized, consisting of administrators, faculty, and students, with the thought that such an organization might be able to head off another eight days in May. The council is still in existence, having so far survived several efforts to abolish it.

There are those who believe that it was a good thing our students did, joining with thousands of other protestors and thus shortening the duration of the war in Vietnam.

The gap between the generations of the Depression and World War II and their children had grown far wider than most of the former realized. President Huntley's mail in May, mostly from older alumni, was preponderantly favorable to the actions taken by the administration and the faculty ("never been so proud of Washington and Lee"); a few characterized these actions as not strong enough ("gutless"), but rarely was any understanding or sympathy for the students expressed.

The successful resolution of the crisis allowed the implementation the next year of a 12-12-6 calendar* that is still in existence, and of a less-constraining set of group requirements, which has now been revised.

President Huntley's masterful handling of the difficult days in May solidified his position as president still further with all his constituencies — trustees, faculty, alumni and students — and thus facilitated his achievements of the following twelve years.

If "All's Well That Ends Well" (or pretty well), then "sweet" (indeed) "are the uses of adversity," as "Eight Days in May" and many of the other crises faced by Washington and Lee well demonstrate. 

Appendix

A Brief Look at Earlier Crises at Washington and Lee and Its Predecessor Institutions

IN ORDER TO PUT EVENTS into historical and national perspective, I've sketched several earlier critical situations in W&L's history.

Washington and Lee University and its antecedent institutions were not unaccustomed to crises. Only a few months after the announcement of Washing-

ton's gift, the Virginia legislature adopted an act that would have created an entirely new institution called the "College of Washington," instead of the already existing Liberty Hall Academy. This bill completely disregarded the Academy's president, trustees, faculty and charter of 1782. It has not been established that Thomas Jefferson was involved in this curious act (machination?). At any rate, in 1798 the original trustees succeeded in having the act repealed, thus saving Liberty Hall (by now renamed Washington Academy) from hostile takeover.

However, adversity of a different sort struck unexpectedly "on a doleful night" five years later when the principal building of the academy was destroyed by fire. Nevertheless, it temporarily continued in rented quarters and was able to open again on a part of its present grounds by the end of 1804.

The 1830s were for Washington College a decade of vanishing college presidents. Characterized by an unorthodoxy of educational views that would have rendered him avant garde a hundred years later, President Louis Marshall (a brother of the famous Chief Justice) departed from the Athens of Southwest Virginia after a short tenure, without bothering to resign. He was reported to have been "disgusted" because the trustees had withheld a portion of his salary.

Marshall's successor, Henry Vethake, stayed in Lexington less than two years, departing suddenly and without formal notice to the board, eventually letting it be known through a stranger that he intended to accept a position at the University of Pennsylvania. [He became professor of mathematics and eventually provost there.]

A quarter of a century later, the resignation and departure of its president heralded a much more severe crisis for the college. In a well-known incident, shortly after Fort Sumter had been fired upon, Dr. George Junkin, an intransigent Unionist, demanded the removal of the disunion flag he saw waving above the statue of Washington on top of the center building. When it turned out that he lacked the support of the trustees, he resigned the position he had held not unskillfully for about a dozen years, soon departing with his youngest daughter, Julia Fishburne, for Pennsylvania. (In a final gesture of reconciliation, one afternoon in October 1925 both were reinterred in the Stonewall Jackson Cemetery in Lexington).

Washington College operated for the next four-and-a-half years with no president at all, *mirabile dictu*, and the board of trustees met only sporadically during the war. Somehow or other, the four-member faculty (J. J. White, John L. Campbell, Alex. Nelson, and Carter Harris) managed to keep the college in operation, although toward the end, the few students left were mostly in the preparatory school. The self-confident faculty even disregarded an offer made by the trustees for the use of the college facilities as an army hospital, locking the buildings and giving the keys for safekeeping to Professor White.

* Two traditional twelve-week semesters followed by a six-week term when only one or two courses were normally taken, encouraging field work and overseas study.

Ironically, what could have been a crisis of major proportions not only was not so perceived, but through Robert E. Lee's personality, reputation, and administrative skills emerged as a period of educational triumph.

A virulent controversy in presidential succession, involving the latent issue of sectarianism (read Presbyterianism), arose in 1900 after the death of Custis Lee's eminent successor, William Lyne Wilson. When the trustees finally elected George H. Denny president, Harry St. George Tucker, who had been acting president, resigned, an act that for some time disrupted fund-raising efforts then in progress.

Washington and Lee rode out both world wars with honor and no discernible long-range disruption. The Great Depression for a while did have a chilling effect on the institution, and no joy was felt by the faculty at the three decreases in salary that financial exigencies demanded. Yet these salary losses were eliminated before long, and by 1941 President Gaines could proudly announce to the faculty that henceforth there would be an annual \$100 increase for all. ■

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